

JAMES McDONALD — SARAH FERGUSON



James McDonald, according to his own statement when receiving a blessing from Patriarch William Smith at Nauvoo, Ill., on August 16, 1845, was born June 1, 1802, in Crawsfordsburn, County Down, Ireland. Sarah Ferguson was born that same year in Down County according to her own words when receiving her blessing that same day. Her tombstone in the cemetery at Heber City, Utah, gives her birthdate as Oct. 13, 1802.

Born at the dawning of the 19th century, James and Sarah were destined to share great changes. The Prophet Joseph Smith was born in Vermont in Dec., 1805. Within the decade previous to, and that following this event, many of the great minds of all time were born, and with their growth civilization surged forward.

Among those born to greatness at the opening of the 19th century were Charles Darwin (1809-1882) who would advance his "Origin of the Species," Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) who would stir men's emotions with "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Thomas Macauley (1800-1859) who would write a great history of England, and Karl Marx (1818-1883) whose philosophy was destined to affect humanity.

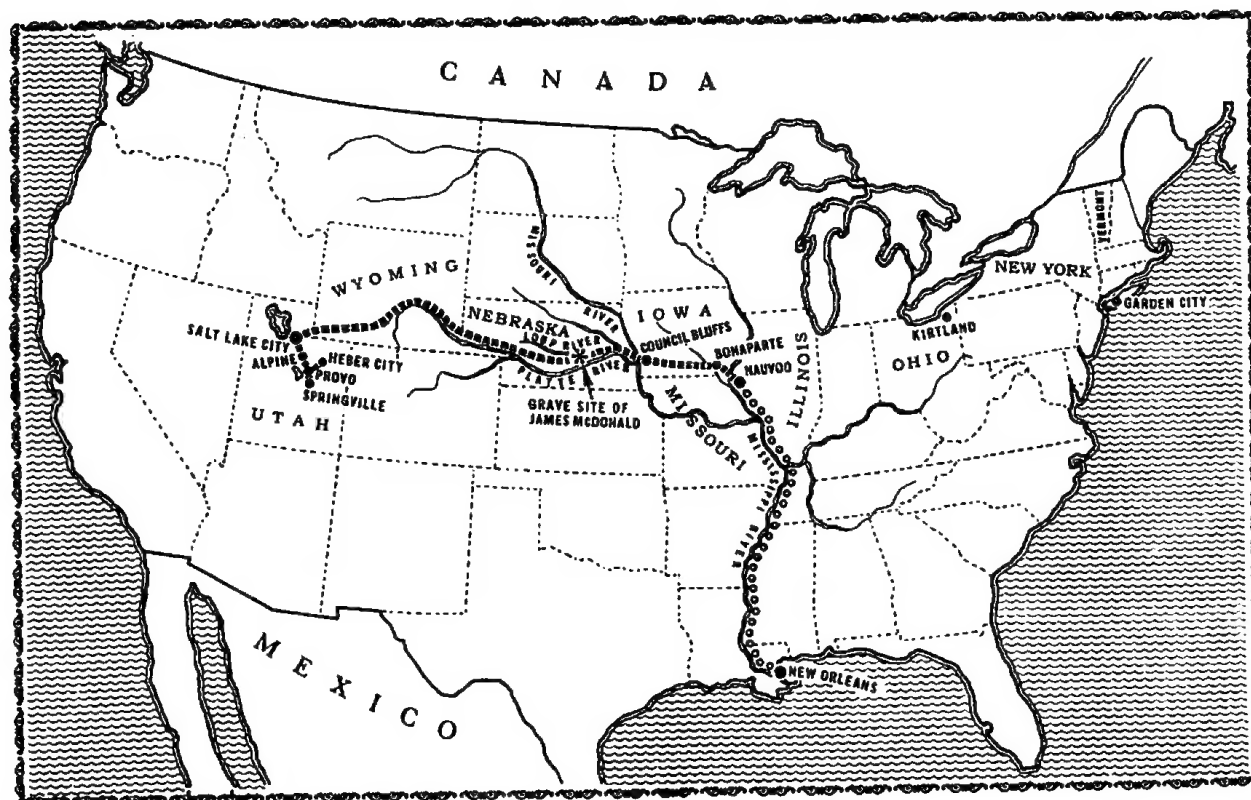
Many great writers lived at this time: Victor Hugo (1802-1885), Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881),

Percy Shelley (1792-1822) and John Keats (1795-1821), Balzac (1799-1850), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), Henry W. Longfellow (1807-1882) William Thackeray (1811-1863), Herman Melville (1819-1891); and James Russell Lowell (1819-1891).

But not all the new light of this era was willingly accepted. William Wordsworth (1770-1850) had written his "Ode On the Intimations of Immortality" and had been severely criticised by the Church of England to the extent that the poem was rejected and silenced for the time being.

This was a time when great musicians were burdened with gifts for the world. Italians listened to the violin of Niccolo Paganini (1782-1840), the works of Beethoven (1770-1827) and Franz Schubert (1797-1828) were enjoyed, and the genius of Frederic Chopin and Franz Liszt was recorded for the ages. Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) created great opera.

Great advancements were made in many fields at the opening of the 19th century. Eli Whitney's cotton gin had been patented in 1794, the sewing machine was gradually being perfected, Robert Fulton's steamboat sailed the Hudson River in 1807, and that same year the streets of London were lighted with gas. Slavery was outlawed in England and there was much ado about self-



the ocean-going sailboat, *Fanny*, and waited three or four days for everything to be pronounced ready.

An idea of preparations involved is obtained from Church historical records which state of this voyage:⁴ "Passage costs three pounds fifteen shillings to four pounds, including provisions. Passengers find their own bedding and cooking utensils; and all their luggage goes free. On arriving at New Orleans a passage can be obtained up the Mississippi River 1,500 miles by steamer for fifteen shillings, and freight free."

The departure of this group of emigrants is noted in Documentary History of the Church under date of Jan. 23, 1844. It is stated there: "The ship *Fanny* under Captain Patterson sailed from Liverpool with 210 saints on board."⁵

Church records of Atlantic crossings prior to 1849 do not record passenger's names, so exactly how and when the James McDonald family came to America would never have been known had not the son John recorded his recollections of the trip. Although he was only a boy just past his tenth birthday when they left, his recollections 64 years later were clear and accurate. His story given at the family reunion in 1908 coincides with Church records.

John's account of their voyage is verified in several ways. The storm he describes was great to him as a boy and to other sea-sick, sea-weary passengers, but for the sailors used to being strapped to their posts in threatening weather, it was commonplace. John's story is further verified by the fact that the story of the *Fanny* is the only record of a sailing that year which speaks of a "calm" as John remembered, and it was the only ship that year to be met by the *Maid of Iowa*. The fact that he remembered that Dan Jones was Captain of the ship on which they went up the Mississippi River to Nauvoo was climactic proof.

Following is the story of their ocean voyage as recorded in Church Emigration Records.⁶ The ship *Fanny* under Captain Patterson sailed from Liverpool Tuesday, Jan. 23, 1844, with 210 souls on board under the direction of Elder William Kay who in a letter to Reuben Hedlock dated New Orleans May 9., 1844, gives the following account:

"We came into New Orleans on Mar. 7, 1844 at 7 o'clock in the morning. We should have been in sooner but for having to stop at the bar for a considerable time to wait for a steamer; and we had also had a calm in the Bay; but I believe that no people that ever crossed the Atlantic had a more prosperous journey than the Lord had fa-

⁴Church Emigration Vol. 1, year 1844, Church Historian's Office.

⁵Documentary History of the Church Vol. 6 date of Apr. 13, 1844.

⁶Church Emigration Vol. 1 year 1844



and sharp tongue. One little great granddaughter was sent with a cup of sugar for Granny. A big dog, leaping and barking at the gate, caused the child to spill the sugar which to pioneering Sarah was inexcusable carelessness. Sugar was so scarce! But a leaping dog can be terrifying to a child.

Again Granny was fretful and scolding because she had waited so long for the loaf of freshly

baked bread her young grandson delivered. But he could not know how long and lonely the hours were becoming for the aging Sarah, and it was not his fault that the bread had been slow to rise.

There are many sides to all people. It is well that Sarah's granddaughter, Mary Ann McDonald Fisher, recorded of her: "She not only reared her family, but she took care of the Kearns children whose mother died crossing the plains. We met one of the Kearns boys at a Black Hawk Reunion in Springville, and he told us Sarah was the best woman who ever lived, and he went on to say he wants her to be among the first to meet him 'over there.'"

Sarah left for "over there" on March 8, 1883. She is buried on her son John's cemetery lot in Heber City. A headstone of white marble, elegant in its day, was erected to her memory. During an especially heavy winter a few years ago the grave sank and the headstone collapsed. Some of her great-grandchildren have replaced it with a new stone on which is engraved the original tombstone inscription:

Sarah Ferguson McDonald
Wife of James McDonald

Soft be thy slumber, fair and sweet
And holy be thy rest
In realms of glory we shall meet
Among the pure and blest.

OUR PROVEN PROGENITORS

GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER

===== 1 - JAMES FERGUSON - 1704 - 1737
(Md.) Mrs. Ferguson

John - 1730
2 - SAMUEL - 1732
William - 1734
Jane - 1737

GREAT GRAND FATHER

===== 2 - SAMUEL FERGUSON - 1732 - 1815
(Md.) - Ann Alderdice - 1738 - 1825

3 - SAMUEL - (about 1775)
James - (about 1779)
John - (about 1780)

GRAND FATHER

(A) - MOSES McDONALD - (abt. 1774) ===== 3 - SAMUEL FERGUSON - (about 1775)
(Md.) - Mary Glass - (abt. 1774) (Md.) Mary Alderdice - 1775

(A) - JAMES - 1802-1850
Sarah - (abt. 1803)
Mary Cunningham-1805-1888
William - 1807
Betty - (abt. 1809)
John - 1811

Samuelson - (abt. 1790)
Margaret - (abt. 1790)
Thomas - (abt. 1794)
William - (abt. 1796)
Mary - (abt. 1800)
4 - SARAH - 1802 - 1883
John - (abt. 1804)
Jane - (abt. 1806)

PARENTS

(A) - JAMES MC DONALD - 1802 - 1850 - - - Married - - - 4 - SARAH FERGUSON - 1802 - 1883

5 - Jane - - - - 1827 - 1903
6 - John - - - - 1829 - 1829
7 - Eliza - - - - 1831 - 1901
8 - John - - - - 1833 - 1910
9 - William - - - - 1834 - 1921
10 - Robert - - - - 1836 - 1913
11 - Mary - - - - 1837 - 1899
12 - David - - - - 1840 - 1845
13 - Joseph Smith - 1842 - 1930
14 - Hyrum - - - - 1845 - 1845

CHILDREN

JAMES AND SARAH FERGUSON McDONALD

James McDonald was born June 1, 1802, in Crawfordfurn, County Down, Ireland, son of Moses McDonald and Mary Glass. He married Sarah Ferguson in Ireland about 1825 or 1826. She was born October 13, 1803, in Lisburn, Ireland, daughter of Samuel and Nancy Alderice Ferguson. They were the parents of 10 children: Jane, born 1826; John, born 1828, who died in infancy; Eliza, born 1830; John, born 1832; William, born

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1834; Mary, born 1836; David, born 1836, who died in infancy; Hyrum, born 1839, dying in infancy; Robert, born 1840, and Joseph, born 1842, all born in Ireland, and Hyrum, born 1846 at Nauvoo, Illinois, and who died in infancy.

The McDonalds first heard the missionaries of the LDS Church in Belfast, Ireland, in 1841, and invited them to hold meetings in their home. They were one of the first five families to be baptized. Immediately they desired to come to Zion, but were poor and had no means. Through their industriousness they saved enough for the trip and in 1843 sailed from Liverpool, England, with a company of 250 saints. The boat was small and crowded. Two days after they left, the wind died down and they could not move for 10 days. Then a storm struck which lasted three days and nights, damaging the ship and leaving everyone seasick and fearing for their lives. Finally the storm blew off their course and they made the crossing in six weeks to New Orleans. There they boarded the Prophet Joseph Smith's steamboat, "Maid of Iowa," and went up the Mississippi to Nauvoo, a 10-day trip. Hyrum Smith met them and offered an old home to them in which to live. They had 75 cents remaining when they arrived, which was spent on an ax. The old home had no doors or windows, but they repaired it and made it livable. Then the ague struck and they suffered with it nine months, finally being able to seek work. James was employed with a farmer, who paid in produce, and they earned two cows, two wagons, vegetables, flour and cornmeal to last through the winter. They remained in Nauvoo two and one-half years before the mob drove them out. They went to Boneparte, Iowa, living there three years in preparing to move west. In 1849 they

lived at Kanesville, near Council Bluffs, and in the spring of 1850 began their journey to Utah with three yoke of oxen, two yoke of cows and a pony, plus their wagon and provisions. Cholera broke out when they reached the Platte River and many died. James helped dig a grave for a man at 10 a.m. and before many hours he had been afflicted himself and died before dark that night. The next morning his body was wrapped in a quilt and buried at the second crossing of the Platte River on June 18, 1850. Sarah was grief-stricken, but Jane, the eldest child, took up her father's whip and the journey continued. The oldest sons helped procure meat and food along the way. They arrived in Utah with Company J in September, 1850, and spent six weeks in Salt Lake, then moving to Mountainville (now Alpine), where they spent the winter and moved on to Springville in March, 1851. Sarah's children worked to support their mother, but gradually married or moved away for work. She served as the first Relief Society president in Springville, and in 1862 moved with her sons, John, William and Joseph, and daughters, Jane and Mary, to Heber, where they all took up land, built homes and reared their families. The boys built a home for their mother across from her daughter, Jane Clyde. She died in Heber in 1883 at the age of 78.